

Fire and Aviation Preparedness Review Guide

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BLM National Fire Preparedness Review Guide

POLICY

The Federal Wildland Fire Policy states that “Agencies will ensure their capability to provide safe, cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management plans through appropriate planning, staffing, training, equipment, and management oversight.”

The Director, BLM National Office of Fire and Aviation (OF&A), accomplishes this in part through the fire preparedness review process.

What the review does

Fire preparedness reviews assess fire programs for compliance with established fire policies and procedures as outlined in the current *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and other pertinent policy documents. Reviews identify organizational, operational, procedural, personnel, or equipment deficiencies, and recommend specific corrective actions.

BLM review schedules

- BLM Field Offices or Districts conduct fire preparedness reviews annually.
- BLM State Offices conduct state-wide fire preparedness reviews every two years.
- The BLM National Office conducts national fire preparedness reviews of each BLM state fire program every four years.

Schedule for future BLM national reviews

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
OR	ID	CO	AK	OR	ID	CO	AK	OR
UT	NM	MT	CA	UT	NM	MT	CA	UT
AZ	ES	NV	WY	AZ	ES	NV	WY	AZ

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Each unit of the state fire program is reviewed for operational preparedness. Each review begins with a briefing of the State Director and/or staff. The Review Team Leader will then give an inbriefing to the Agency Administrator (District or Field Office Manager) at the unit level. After these briefings team members disperse and begin to review their functional areas. Standardized checklists are used. A written report containing findings and recommended actions is prepared. At the conclusion of each local unit review the Agency Administrator receives an out-briefing and a draft final report for the respective unit. The draft State report, presented at the state closeout, will include all unit level draft reports. Out-briefings will be scheduled and managed to last less than one hour. Team member participation in the out-briefing is determined by the Review Team Leader.

Review activities

Review activities include:

- Interviewing fire program and related personnel.
- Reviewing and verifying required documentation.
- Inspecting fire equipment and facilities.

- Evaluating field fire crew drills.
- Writing the draft report.

Functional areas reviewed

Unit Agency Administrator	Dispatch
Fire Program Management	Engine Module
Geographic Area Coordination Center	Hotshot Crew (IHC)
Aviation Management	Safety Officer
Training Officer	Helicopter Module
Aviation Base Review	Dozer/Tractor Plow Module
Individual Firefighter	Hand Crew Non-IHC

The final report

The final report is submitted to the Director, OF&A, within 14 days of the state close-out. The Director, OF&A, will issue it to the State Director with a request for a written action plan.

The report includes:

- Cover letter - Director, OF&A to State Director.
- Commendations - recognize exemplary individual achievement.
- Findings - identify specific fire program deficiencies
- Discussion - elaborate on specific findings, if necessary.
- Recommendations - recommend specific corrective action.
- The Director, OF&A, requests a written action plan in response to the report recommendations.

RESPONDING TO THE REPORT

Unit level reports

The State Office is responsible for ensuring follow-up to unit level recommendations. Follow-up assistance will be provided by the OF&A Team Leader as requested.

State level report

A written action plan must be submitted for approval to the Director, OF&A for each statewide recommendation on this final report. For each of these statewide recommendations, the action plan must propose corrective action, identify individual responsible for action, and provide a proposed due date for completion. Follow-up assistance will be provided by the OF&A Team Leader as requested.

THE REVIEW TEAM

Review teams consist of technical experts from each of the functional areas listed in “The Review Process” section of this website. Team members are selected from local, state, and national offices. Interagency members are selected when appropriate. Team size and makeup depends upon program size and complexity.

Team selection

The Director, OF&A, selects a Team Leader to conduct a scheduled national review. The Team Leader contacts the State FMO and establishes a review schedule. Team size is determined and recruitment of team members begins. A memorandum from the Director OF&A requesting available personnel is issued in December to the State FMO's. A roster of interested personnel is developed in January and February. All interested individuals are encouraged to submit their names and qualifications as per the request letter. Final team selection usually takes several weeks. Team members are identified and contacted to confirm availability. A briefing package is sent to each team member. Travel arrangements are made. The team will assemble and in-brief the day prior to the review to discuss objectives, organization, and administration.

Team member responsibilities

Team Leader

The Team Leader is responsible for the safety and welfare of team members and executing the review. The Team Leader maintains contact with all team members throughout the review process in order to keep members informed and to assist with administrative, organizational and logistical issues. Organizes daily activities, establishes time frames, schedules and facilitates all briefings. Assimilates information from team members, and prepares the Final Report.

Team Member

Team Members are selected to be subject matter experts in their assigned functional area. Team Members are responsible for communicating findings both orally and in writing to the Team Leader or delegate within established time frames. Team Members are expected to review the subject unit to national standards as shown in the supplied checklists and not to the Standard Operating Procedures found on their home unit. Team members are encouraged to bring laptop computers to assist in the preparation of review documentation.

Functional Area Leader

In many cases the Review Team Leader will select a Functional Area Leader (Dispatch, Engines Aviation) to assist in the management of specific areas within the review. This individual will be a highly experienced individual who can help the Review Team Leader facilitate the review process and streamline the information gathering process. The Functional Area Leader will compile and summarize inputs from their team of specialists. Each Functional Area Leader will be expected to ensure the completion of checklists and provide draft findings and recommendations to the Team Leader. The Functional Area Leader is responsible to brief the review Team Leader on any finding that could cause question in the unit being reviewed and as needed, accompany the Review Team Leader to out-briefings to explain findings and recommendations to the local unit administrators'.

State Office Liaison

A state office fire program manager serves as the liaison between the review team and the local agency administrators and fire staffs. The state liaison coordinates team activities with the local units and the State Office, negotiates review itinerary with the Team Leader and ensures that agency administrators and fire staff are aware of schedules. The state liaison coordinates team logistics, including travel schedules and lodging with the Team

Leader. Communicates review finding to the state fire staff on an on going basis. Provides the team with a list of key contacts, locations and phone numbers. The liaison is not responsible for contributing to or editing the documents prepared by the team.

Expectations of team members

The evaluation process requires a great deal of time and effort. Team members will conduct themselves professionally. They should not discuss personal business or biases, should work only in designated areas, and should maintain control of review documents at all times.

It is extremely important that team members are accurate and remain focused on the specific tasks that they are assigned. Team members who complete their assigned workload will be expected to assist others in completing their work. No one will be released from duty until their assigned work is completed and no other team members require assistance. The review is a team effort.

BECOMING A TEAM MEMBER

A letter soliciting participation on the review team is sent to the State FMO's in December. This letter will be distributed by each state office to its employees. Prospective teams members need to apply through the process outlined by their specific state office for team participation. Prospective team members will need to have the approval of their supervisor to apply. Selection to a team will involve a significant commitment of time and effort. Care should be taken that you can fulfill your comment if selected. The OF&A Operations staff is available to answer any questions you have regarding the qualifications, duties and requirements of a team member.

Perdiem and Pay

The OF&A will pay for all travel and overtime expenses. Each review team member will arrange for their travel to and from the review location. All arrangements for travel once the team is assembled will be done through the Team Leader. The base pay of the team members is the responsibility of the member's home unit.

Travel and lodging

Travel to and from each unit typically takes place in the morning or evening prior to or after the daily work has been completed. Team members will travel in groups to share driving responsibilities. One team member will be designated to track all team members to insure that they depart and arrive on time. Coordination of departure times will allow team members adequate time to get from one place to another. A formal check-in system will be established. Maintaining a set travel schedule and checking-in with the team or Functional Area Leader is required. Lodging will be coordinated through the Team Leader. Meals are not scheduled and may take place at odd hours. Work hours are long and may include working or traveling on weekends.

Safety management

Safe work procedures are the responsibility of all team members. Driving, travel and work rest are critical safety issues facing the team. The review requires long hours and frequent driving early in the morning and late in the evening. Time must be allowed for adequate rest and relaxation.

CHECKLISTS

The standards reflected in the checklists are established national policy requirements. The checklists reflect the agency standard for operations and performance in each area of review and are not arbitrary standards set by the review team. These checklists are used on all of the OF&A National Preparedness Reviews to maintain a consistent level of review nationwide. The individual states can request individual items of interest be added to the checklists used in their state review, but these additions must not undermine any established national policy requirements outlined in the standard checklist.

Unit Agency Administrator	Dispatch
Fire Program Management	Engine Module
Geographic Area Coordination Center	Hotshot Crew
Aviation Management	Safety Officer
Training Officer	Helicopter Module
Aviation Base Review	Dozer/Tractor Plow Module
Individual Firefighter	Hand Crew Non-IHC

CHECKLIST REVISIONS

Proposed revisions to the checklists can be sent to Kurt La Rue: Fire Management Specialist; OF&A, BLM Fire Operations Group (klarue@blm.gov). Comments should be typed into the “remarks” section of the checklist proposed for change. These checklists can be sent electronically to the above address for consideration. Proposed changes need to reflect current national policy and be a quantifiable item that directly applies to fire preparedness. The proposed revisions should include the exact verbiage that is being proposed. Checklists are reviewed for compliance with agency policy and standards each January. Proposed changes will need to be submitted by the end of January for consideration that year.

DRILLS

All resources will be given a field exercise. All field exercises will be reviewed for operational proficiency. The drills can be done in the field on “mock” fires or they can be done in the station. The same items will be reviewed regardless of the location of the drill. These drill formats are for reference only and not part of the written package that is submitted to the local unit at the completion of the review. These drills give the review team members and the local units an opportunity to know in advance what the standards are and what the team will be looking for and give a standardized set of skills testing for agency resources nationwide.

Drills & Skills Summary	Initial Response Protocol
Initial Report form Scene	Briefing/Risk Management
Mobile Attack	Stationary Attack/Hose Lay
Use of Foam	Fireline Construction
Vehicle Inspection and Equipment Location	Portable Pump Exercise
Handtool Safety Check	Firing Devices
Belt Weather Kit	

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